

MS 265 Death of a Volunteer Procedures

1.0 Introduction

These procedures support the implementation of MS 265 *Death of a Volunteer*, which covers the death of a Volunteer (including a Trainee). The procedures provide a framework for Posts and Headquarters staff to effectively respond to the death of a Volunteer.

MS 265 and these procedures (and Attachments to MS 265) should be thoroughly reviewed by Post and Headquarters staff who would normally participate in any response to the death of a Volunteer. A more detailed, interactive checklist of actions and activities for each office is provided in an Excel format in Attachment C *Response Action Checklist and Toolkit*. In addition, each Post is required to have country-specific Post Death Procedures, which address the unique logistical, administrative and cultural challenges of the country where the Post is located. They are based on Attachment B Post Death Procedures Template, and must be reviewed by Post and Headquarters staff who would normally participate in any response to the death of a Volunteer.

2.0 Roles and Responsibilities

The general roles and responsibilities of offices and staff involved in the response to the death of a Volunteer are provided below.

2.1 Post Roles and Responsibilities

(a) Country Director (CD)

- 1) Leads Post response and ensures that Post Response Team members understand their roles and responsibilities. Leads planning and preparation, including the development of Post Death Procedures. Ensures that staff likely to participate on the Post Response Team are familiar with MS 265 policies and procedures.
- 2) Makes the initial notification and subsequent reports to the Counseling and Outreach Unit and the Regional Director and ensures coordination with the U.S. Mission. Ensures that a detailed log of all response actions are recorded by Post.
- 3) The Country Director should ensure that Peace Corps staff, or an appropriate representative, stand watch at all times with the Volunteer remains to ensure dignified and respectful handling of the remains.
- 4) Consults with the Office of Safety and Security regarding arrangements for autopsy, either through agreement with the Armed Forces Medical Examiner System (AFMES) or by alternative means.
- 5) Selects staff member to accompany remains to the Home-of-Record (HOR). The Country Director is most often the best candidate to escort the Volunteer's remains to the HOR and should be prepared to play that important and difficult role.

- 6) Coordinates media communications closely with the U.S. Embassy Public Affairs section and the Office of Communications.

(b) Peace Corps Medical Officer (PCMO)

- 1) Acts as a member of the Post Response Team, coordinating completion of necessary medical procedures, based on the Post Death Procedures regarding autopsy, embalming, and pathological specimens.
- 2) Assists planning and preparation, including the development of Post Death Procedures, especially regarding autopsy, preparation, casketing and shipment of remains. Responsible for identifying a qualified pathologist and an in-country facility capable of performing and autopsy.
- 3) As appropriate, travels to the location of the body and escorts the body to the refrigeration site.
- 4) Ensures positive identification of Volunteer remains as soon as possible.
- 5) Attends both the autopsy and the embalming, if possible under local law. Records all significant findings from the autopsy. If the PCMO is unavailable, another Peace Corps staff person should be present to ensure that the dignity of and respect for the Volunteer is maintained.
- 6) The PCMO should make every effort to photograph the remains prior to the start of the autopsy.
- 7) Provide dental records as needed to assist in identifying the remains.
- 8) The PCMO must send a medical report designated 'For Med Eyes Only' on each Volunteer involved to the Office of Volunteer Support. The report should include the following:
 - Description of the incident;
 - Description of the first contact with the remains;
 - Comment on the escort of the remains;
 - Comment on the release of the remains to a mortuary;
 - Description of the autopsy and any findings;
 - Description of the embalming;
 - Method of sealing of the casket;
 - Comment on appropriateness of family members viewing the body; and
 - Comment on memorial service that was held.

(c) Director of Management and Operations (DMO)

- 1) Acts as a member of the Post Response Team, managing the administrative and financial matters to support the response, including coordination with the Region and Office of the Chief Financial Officer to ensure funding for all allowable expenses.
- 2) Manages logistics for transporting remains.
- 3) Works with Country Director to coordinate, inventory, secure and transport the property of the deceased Volunteer.
- 4) Submits administrative and financial information to OCFO.

(d) Director of Programming and Training

- 1) Acts as a member of the Post Response Team, providing support as needed.
- 2) May oversee coordination of in-country memorial service(s).

(e) Safety and Security Coordinator

- 1) Acts as member of Post Response Team to interface with U.S. Embassy Regional Security Office and local law enforcement officials as necessary.
- 2) Works with Peace Corps Safety and Security Officer (PCSSO) and Regional Security Officer (RSO) to advise the Country Director and Post Response Team on relevant country laws, policies and procedures and how they impact Volunteer death procedures in country.

2.2 Headquarters Offices Roles and Responsibilities

The Regional Director, in consultation with the Office of Global Operations, serves as the Response Manager and establishes a Headquarters Response Team. The Headquarters Response Team meets daily, or as needed, until the response is completed. Each office listed below should designate a representative to serve on the Headquarters Response Team.

(a) Office of Volunteer Support

Counseling and Outreach Unit (COU): The COU, through the COU Duty Officer, acts as the initial recipient of the report of death from Post and notifies the Peace Corps Director, Regional Director, and supporting offices. The COU will assign a Family Liaison from its trained staff to act as the main point of contact with the deceased's family throughout the response. COU will also assign trained staff to work with Post in supporting staff and Volunteers affected by the Volunteer death, and may travel to Post if requested.

Office of Medical Services (OMS): Advises the PCMO on the handling of blood, fluid, and tissue specimens and/or slides prior to an autopsy. Advises and supports Peace Corps Medical Officer as necessary.

(b) **Region**

The responsible Regional Director, assisted by regional staff, will lead the Headquarters Response Team and will designate or serve as the point of contact between the Post and Headquarters. The Regional Director will chair the Headquarters Response Team and will provide timely reports to the Director and members of the Headquarters Response Team.

(c) **Office of the Director**

Ensures timely notification of next-of-kin/designated representative and conveys condolences to family. Oversees the agency's communication and response including press releases and agency-wide messages. Ensures Peace Corps representation at Volunteer funerals or memorial services. Works with Office of Global Operations, Office of Congressional Relations and the Office of Communications to notify appropriate Congressional, White House and State Department officials.

(d) **Office of Safety and Security**

Advises Post and Region on appropriate coordination with the RSO and local law enforcement officials, as necessary. Dispatches the Peace Corps Safety and Security Officer, as needed, to Post to address safety and security concerns or to advise on investigations. Consults with Post and Region regarding arrangements for autopsy, either through agreement with the Armed Forces Medical Examiner System (AFMES) or other alternative.

(e) **Office of the General Counsel**

Provides legal and policy advice as appropriate.

(f) **Office of the Chief Financial Officer**

Works with Region to ensure that adequate funds are available to support the response and transportation of remains; provides complete copy of Volunteer personnel file to COU and Region as soon as possible; records death in financial system with information from form PC-440 submitted by Post; determines life insurance coverage. Provides guidance to DMO and CD at Post in terms of budget for Volunteer Death related expenditures (memorial services, memorial items for family, etc.).

(g) **Office of Management**

Ensures appropriate support from management sections and teams as necessary with special emphasis on transportation and travel support of the deceased, accompanying staff and other travelers. Administrative Services provides memorial flag to a Peace Corps representative to present to the Volunteer's family. Ensures Volunteer's name is included on the memorial plaque at Peace Corps HQ.

(h) **Office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection**

Coordinates Regional Office support for escort accompanying the Volunteer's remains and for supporting Peace Corps staff participation in funerals or memorial services in the U.S.

Responsible for the compassionate, in-person delivery of Volunteer's personal effects to next-of-kin/designated representative.

(i) Office of Global Operations

Provides coordination and support for the Headquarters Response Team. Disseminates lessons learned and incorporates into future guidance.

(j) Office of Communications

Works with Regions to develop and issue talking points and press releases related to the Volunteer death and responds to media inquiries. Provides guidance to Post on communications with local media.

(k) Office of Congressional Relations

Advises appropriate Congressional offices regarding the Volunteer death; encourages Congressional condolence letters; and, provides additional information to Congressional staff or representatives as requested.

(l) Office of Inspector General

In instances where a Volunteer or staff member is suspected of being involved in the death of a Volunteer, the Peace Corps Office of Inspector General is responsible for the investigation of any crime or serious misconduct, including coordinating with the Department of State Office of Diplomatic Security (Criminal Investigative Liaison Branch), the RSO, and other Federal agencies, and, to the extent necessary, serving as liaison with host country law enforcement officials.

2.3 U.S. Embassy:

- (a) Through American Citizen Services, develops Disposition of Remains report which the CD incorporates into an annex to the Post Death Procedures.
- (b) Advises and supports Peace Corps on logistics and contact with U.S. Dispatch Agents as necessary.
- (c) The U.S. Consular Officer has been trained to witness autopsies and embalming and may accompany Peace Corps staff involved in the procedures.

2.4 Armed Forces Medical Examiner System (AFMES):

Through an agreement established by the Office of Safety and Security, AFMES provides autopsy and pathology services when requested.

3.0 Notifications and Reports

(a) Notification Protocol

1. When Post receives word of a possible Volunteer death, Country Director at Post calls Counseling and Outreach Unit (COU) Duty Officer at +1-202-692-1470.

2. After the Country Director has notified the COU Duty Officer, Country Director notifies the RSO, American Citizen Services (ACS) and the Ambassador. The Country Director should explicitly explain to ACS that the Peace Corps will make all family notifications and will coordinate future press announcements with the Ambassador and Public Affairs Office (PAO).
3. Post must make every effort to expeditiously confirm the Volunteer death.
4. COU Duty Officer immediately notifies the Director of COU. Every effort to confirm the Volunteer's identity should be made prior to any additional notifications.
5. Director of COU ensures notification of senior leadership, including status of confirmation of the identity of the deceased, and HQ offices: the Regional Director, Safety and Security Duty Officer, Director, Deputy Director, Chief of Staff, General Counsel, Associate Director of Global Operations, and the Inspector General.
6. Regional Director works with Global Operations to convene Headquarters Response Team

(b) Report of Volunteer Death

Generally between 12-24 hours after a Volunteer death, Post sends a report via e-mail to the Regional Director. Such information should be disclosed only to offices or personnel who have a need to know the information in order to perform their official duties.

(c) CIRS Notification

All Volunteer deaths must also be reported via the Crime Incident Reporting System (CIRS) within three business days of the incident. This report must be done whether or not a crime is suspected.

3.1 Contents of the Initial Report

The template for the initial report of the death is provided in *Attachment C Response Action Checklist and Toolkit*, under the Initial Report tab.

3.2 Subsequent Reports

- (a) The Post must send follow-up e-mails to the Regional Director at least once every 24 hours, or as frequently as needed, until all uncertainties about the death are resolved.
- (b) The Office of Safety and Security will conduct an inquiry into the Volunteer death, even if the death was determined to be accidental. The inquiry will help the agency develop lessons learned and more fully understand the circumstances around the event, the causal factors and future steps that could be taken to mitigate risks.

4.0 Supporting Families, Volunteers, Staff and Communities

4.1 Supporting Families

- (a) The Director of COU will assign a trained staff member to act as the main liaison between Peace Corps and the family and next-of-kin/designated representative.
- (b) At the request of the family, COU may ask the Office of Gifts and Grants Management to help establish a memorial fund or allocate funds to a Peace Corps Partnership Program (PCPP) in memory of the Volunteer.

4.2 Supporting Volunteers and Staff

- (a) COU will provide a trained staff member to support the grieving process for Volunteers and staff at the request of the Country Director.
- (b) Post should assign a Peace Corps staff member to brief Volunteers about the death as they come into the capital city. Information should be given to the Volunteers frankly and openly. Staff should acknowledge feelings of anger, guilt, and frustration, and make sure that any Volunteer who was involved with the death comes to the capital city as soon as possible. As Volunteers arrive in the capital city it may be helpful to give them a task, such as writing cards, letters or short remembrances for the family of the deceased Volunteer.
- (c) A period of mourning is important for the Volunteer community. Volunteers who were especially close to the Volunteer or who were injured in the same incident may need to be medically evacuated (medevaced) for counseling to the U.S. Other Volunteers may be fearful and vulnerable particularly in the case of a violent or accidental death. For assistance with short term counseling, refer to TG 510 *Mental Health Assessment and Support*.
- (d) The Peace Corps host country staff may have their own way of marking a death. Be sensitive to their needs and include them in the memorial service. Allow them the opportunity to grieve.
- (e) Keep updating the Volunteer community about the death. Ask the representative of Peace Corps at the funeral in the U.S. to bring back any pictures or announcements of the service to make it more real.
- (f) The death of a Volunteer may be a difficult experience for all staff. The PCMO and others directly involved in the response may need some time to recuperate, and may also benefit from support from COU.

4.3 In-Country Memorial Services

- (a) **Post Memorial Service:** When a Post elects to have an in-country memorial service, the Country Director should delegate the coordination of the service(s) to an appropriate staff member, often the Director of Programming Training. Posts are encouraged to include Volunteers in memorial service planning and to provide opportunities at the service(s) for staff and Volunteers to share memories and stories about the deceased. Posts are also encouraged to provide a recording of the service and other appropriate memorial photos or reflections that would be shared with the

deceased's family. All items should be sent to the COU to either be transmitted to the family during the memorial service when possible or be coordinated with the COU so that they can arrive with the rest of the personal effects. In preparation, Post should provide the COU a calendar of memorial events as well as a list of possessions that they wish to be conveyed to the family. The DMO should work closely with the Region Chief Administrative Officer and OCFO's Office of Global Accounts Payable (OGAP) to determine appropriate expenses and spending authority described in MS 724 *Representation Allowance* and MS 729 *Food and Refreshment Expenses*.

- (b) Counterpart and Host-Community Memorial Services:** Posts are also encouraged to attend and support memorial services arranged by host-country officials or members of the deceased Volunteer's site or training community.

5.0 Preparing the Remains

5.1 Autopsy

Many host country laws require an autopsy prior to removal of a body from the country. Where an autopsy is not required by law, the COU must seek permission for an autopsy from the next-of-kin/designated official. On occasion, the remains of the deceased will be transported to an appropriate facility in the U.S., Europe, or other location, e.g., U.S. military facilities, for an autopsy. In these circumstances arrangements must be made to transport the body under refrigerated conditions.

Basic information about autopsies:

Prior to the autopsy, the handling of blood, fluid, and tissue specimens and/or slides should be discussed with OMS. When an autopsy is performed in country, it may be appropriate to collect and refrigerate blood, gastric fluid, urine, or other fluids for future analysis.

Gross Autopsy: A gross autopsy entails inspection of the body and the internal organs so that any structural abnormalities can be ascertained. The cause of death in cases of disease can sometimes be determined on the basis of the "gross autopsy."

Microscopic Examination: At the time of the gross autopsy, specimens of all body tissues are prepared using a fixative. After fixation, sections are taken and placed on microscope slides. Microscopic examination reveals abnormalities in the histologic patterns of the various tissues. These abnormalities can help pinpoint the cause of death in many cases.

Toxicologic Studies: Specimens for biochemical analysis are extremely important in cases where toxic substances may have contributed to the death, either accidentally or with suicidal intent.

5.1 Embalming

Embalming is usually required by commercial air carriers before accepting a body for transport. If autopsy is performed in-country, or if an autopsy will not be performed, embalming prior to repatriation is appropriate.

Embalming prior to autopsy limits the information that can be obtained as it makes microscopic and toxicology analyses more difficult or impossible.

Customs, laws, and procedures regarding embalming vary widely from country to country. The Consular Officer can provide more information on local procedures that should be included when filling in the Post Death Procedures Template

If autopsy at a facility in the U.S., Europe, or other location, e.g., U.S. military facilities, is planned, efforts should be made to arrange for refrigerated shipment of the remains, i.e. without embalming. This may not be possible without extensive advance preparation.

6.0 Casket and Transportation of the Remains

For burials in the United States, the Counseling and Outreach Unit will provide the name of the licensed funeral home/director or other individual to whom the shipment is to be consigned. Hermetically sealable caskets and transfer cases may be available at U.S. Missions, consulates, and U.S. military installations. The Country Director should have this information ahead of time in the Post Death Procedures. In order to avoid delays, the Post should generally adhere to the following procedures:

- (a) Have a through airway bill made out to the final destination (a through airway bill expedites movement of the remains from an international carrier to a domestic carrier at the port of entry), including the following:
 1. FOR CUSTOMS CLEARANCE NOTIFY UPON ARRIVAL
U.S. PORT OF ENTRY, U.S. DISPATCH AGENT
(Name of U.S. Dispatch Agent)
(Complete Address of Dispatch Agent)
(City, State Zip Code)
(Complete phone number)
 2. TRANSFER TO ASSIGNED FUNERAL DIRECTOR:
(Name of Funeral Director)
(Name of Funeral Home)
(Complete Address of Funeral Home)
(City, State, Zip Code)
(Complete Phone Number)
- (b) The addresses of the U.S. Dispatch Agents of the Department of State can be obtained from the Counseling and Outreach Unit. U.S. Dispatch Agents work for the Department of State and facilitate shipments to and from U.S. government employees overseas.
- (c) Send copies of the U.S. Government Bill of Lading and the through airway bill to the appropriate Dispatch Agent as soon as possible;

- (d) Arrange, in coordination with the Office of Transportation as necessary, for CONFIRMED AIR FREIGHT space and CONFIRMED SEATING FOR ESCORT from the host country to final destination on the earliest available flight(s);

NOTE: The Counseling and Outreach Unit may assist the Office of Transportation by acting as the liaison between the various parties involved in arranging the transfer of the remains from an international airport to a domestic airport, for example, from Kennedy Airport, NY to LaGuardia Airport, NY. There must be a minimum of six hours between the arrival time of the international flight and the departure time of the domestic flight to accomplish the transfer. For the transfer of remains from an international carrier to a domestic carrier at the same port of entry airport, a minimum layover of four hours is required.

- (e) Send applicable documents described in 7 FAM 258 (Consular Mortuary Certificate; Certificate of Death; Affidavit by the Local Funeral Director; Transit Permit) with the shipment;
- (f) Inform the Counseling and Outreach Unit by e-mail (the U.S. Dispatch Agent should be an information addressee on all communications concerning shipping arrangements) of the following as it becomes available:
1. Complete shipping schedule, including the names of all airline carriers, all flight numbers, all departure/arrival times and dates, and the name of each airport that is a transfer point. If air freight space and/or escort seating is not confirmed, point this out and request assistance from the Counseling and Outreach Unit;
 2. Through airway bill number;
 3. Complete dimensions of shipping container, including weight, height, length, and depth;
 4. Name of person who will escort the remains, the nature of the escort's relationship to the deceased, and a physical description of the escort to facilitate being met by the U.S. Dispatch Agent at the port of entry;
 5. Confirmation of the departure of the escort and the remains. If time is a critical factor, the escort may choose to confirm departure by an international phone call to the Counseling and Outreach Unit Duty Officer. If necessary, the Counseling and Outreach Unit will arrange routing within the U.S.; however, to avoid confusion, this routing must be confirmed prior to the departure of the escort and the remains from the host country.
- (g) Request the airline carrier accepting the shipment to communicate all information regarding the shipment, the through airway bill number, and the complete flight schedule to the appropriate person(s) at the transfer points and to the carrier making the final delivery to the destination. Instructions advising the final delivering carrier must be included in case the shipment is delayed or re-routed. The carrier accepting the shipment also must confirm that all connecting flights can accommodate the weight and size of the shipping container; and

- (h) Determine any difficulties that might be anticipated in transporting the remains through a third country en route to the U.S., and as necessary enlist the aid of the Embassy or any Peace Corps Country Director there to resolve any problems. Be certain that information copies of any e-mail traffic arising from such a situation are also addressed to the Counseling and Outreach Unit and the U.S. Dispatch Agent.

7.0 Staff Escort of Remains of the Deceased

- (a) The Country Director, or designated staff member, will accompany the shipment of the remains and act as the Peace Corps country representative at the funeral. If possible, the escort should be someone who knew the deceased well and who also knows the host country well. Reservations for transport of remains are not automatically linked with accompanying traveler. When making reservations, take great care to ensure that the two reservations are always together. Request the airline to link the two reservations together. Where appropriate, services of U.S. Embassy expeditors should be engaged, especially at transfer and connection airports.
- (b) Back-up transportation plans must be in place to counter any unforeseen problems, including those caused by delays that may occur. The escort must be able to deal with any and all delays and logistical problems that may be encountered en route. Therefore, the escort should not be an individual who was so closely associated with the deceased that his or her grief would preclude effective handling of any problems that could arise.
- (c) If any significant delays or difficulties, including missed connections, are encountered en route, the escort should enlist the aid of the nearest Embassy Consular Section to resolve the problem and notify the Region and the U.S. Dispatch Agent by whatever means necessary. The escort is responsible for reporting to the Counseling and Outreach Unit immediately upon arrival at the port of entry.
- (d) The U.S. Dispatch Agent at the port of entry is normally responsible for safeguarding the remains during the transfer from an international to a domestic carrier. When neither of these individuals is available, the escort assumes these responsibilities. In extremely unusual cases when the escort does not accompany the remains during shipment, the Counseling and Outreach Unit may authorize the escort to proceed directly to the U.S. port of entry to assume duty.
- (e) The Region will authorize the escort to proceed to Washington, DC for debriefing following the discharge of his or her duties with the next-of-kin/designated representative. The consultation will be done in coordination with the Regional staff. The Office of Volunteer Support will pay transportation and per diem expenses for the escort.
- (f) To the extent possible, ensure that the casket is draped with a U.S. flag during transportation to place of burial.

8.0 Possessions of the Deceased Volunteer

- (a) The Peace Corps has the primary responsibility for the disposition of the Volunteer's possessions, but the Post may contact the Consular Officer at the U.S. Embassy for

information and assistance with respect to performing the inventory and valuation of the personal effects of the deceased. See 7 FAM 224.3, 7 FAM 290. Any questions regarding the custody, inventory, or appraisal of the effects of the deceased must be referred through the Counseling and Outreach Unit to the Office of the General Counsel.

- (b) For purposes of MS 265, the individual named by the deceased as next-of-kin/designated representative on the Trainee/Volunteer Registration Form PC-1487 will serve as the designated representative until an executor or administrator has been designated under state law. Thereafter, upon proper written notice to the Peace Corps, the individual designated under state law will become the designated representative.
- (c) Immediately upon learning of a death, the Country Director must assign one Peace Corps employee, as necessary, in coordination with host country authorities as appropriate, to secure the individual's house or apartment and limit access only to Peace Corps staff, the Regional Security Officer, the Consular Officer, and host country authorities. The Volunteer residence must be secured regardless of the location of the death. Potential evidence related to the death must not be tampered with, specifically evidence or material found near or on the body must be safeguarded. Local authorities will generally inventory, collect and maintain items at the death scene if an investigation is being conducted.

8.1 Inventory of Personal Effects

- (a) All of the Volunteer's personal effects must be inventoried, including those on the body, those in the Volunteer's living quarters, and any other personal effects, including currency. Any illegal items, as determined by the Country Director, will not be returned.
- (b) Peace Corps may send items of minimal value (i.e., with a total value of not more than U.S. \$1,000) back with the escort, along with a list of those items, and give them to the next-of-kin/designated representative. This might include personal effects such as photographs, diaries, letters, and other items of minimal value. Those personal effects carried personally by the staff escort must be secured and kept in the escort's presence at all times until arrival at the final destination. An acknowledgement of receipt from the next-of-kin/designated representative should be obtained, if possible. The Country Director must include on the inventory any items returned by the escort, with a notation that they were turned over to the next-of-kin/designated representative. The Country Director must advise the Counseling and Outreach Unit of any possessions withheld due to their un-presentable condition or relevance to local investigation.
- (c) The Country Director must arrange for the collection of any personal funds from the residence and submit a voucher for payment to the designated representative. See the Overseas Financial Management Handbook, 66.6.20 for guidance.
- (d) The Country Director must keep a copy of the inventory, and e-mail the inventory to the Counseling and Outreach Unit. The Counseling and Outreach Unit will send a copy of the inventory to the designated representative. The designated representative will also be provided with a list of any items given to the next-of-kin/designated representative if it is someone different, along with a copy of the acknowledgement of receipt if it exists.

- (e) The next-of-kin/designated representative should indicate how each item in the inventory should be disposed of. The designated representative should designate those items to be returned and those to be sold or given away and designate to whom they are to be given. For example, the designated representative may choose to give some items to other Volunteers who were close to the deceased or to Host Country Nationals in the community where the deceased lived.
- (f) The designated representative should keep a copy of the inventory and return a list of the designations to the Counseling and Outreach Unit. The Counseling and Outreach Unit will, in turn, keep a copy of the list of designations and forward a copy by e-mail to the Country Director. Upon receipt of his or her copy, the Country Director will contact the Counseling and Outreach Unit for final shipping instructions for all personal effects that the designated representative wants returned.

8.2 Shipping of Effects

- (a) The personal effects must be packed in air freight containers of the lightest weight material available that is substantial enough to withstand handling and weather conditions, as well as the distance and time involved from origin to destination. Special care should be taken to ensure against breakage or other harm to the personal effects. Trunks, footlockers, etc. should be locked. Containers for air freight must not exceed dimensions of 80" x 40" x 40" personal effects shipped to the U.S. should be shipped by air, regardless of weight. For customs purposes, indicate on all shipping documentation that the Volunteer is deceased. All items should be sent in one shipment when possible as to minimize the strain on the designated representative and family.
- (b) The Counseling and Outreach Unit will coordinate with the Post and Country Desk Officer to ensure that any and all personal effects are shipped to a designated staff member of the Peace Corps who, upon receipt of such personal effects, will make arrangements for personal delivery, of the effects to the designated representative or someone selected by the designated representative. In no instance will personal effects be sent directly to the family unless done so at the express direction of the designated representative, as determined by an officer of the Counseling and Outreach Unit.

9.0 In-Country Checking and Savings Accounts of Deceased

The Director of Management and Operations or designee at the Post will assist in closing the Volunteer's in-country bank accounts by implementing the following procedures, as applicable:

- (a) The Director of Management and Operations will e-mail the Counseling and Outreach Unit with details of the bank's requirements for the closure of accounts of deceased individuals. This may include the need to obtain a Power of Attorney or letters testamentary from the designated representative;
- (b) The Counseling and Outreach Unit will coordinate obtaining the necessary Power of Attorney and/or letters testamentary and forward them to the designated in-country employee, who in turn will coordinate with in-country bank officials to close the account;

(c) Upon receiving the funds from the accounts, the Director of Management and Operations will e-mail the Counseling and Outreach Unit indicating the amounts of the funds and advising that the funds will be issued to the next-of-kin/designated representative, or if there is no next-of-kin/designated representative, then such person as may be designated to receive such funds under a Power of Attorney. If there is no next-of-kin/designated representative or person designated under a Power of Attorney, the funds will be paid out in accordance with the order of precedence set forth in 5 U.S.C. § 5582(b). (As a precautionary note, the Counseling and Outreach Unit may need to inform the next-of-kin/designated representative in writing of the need to review all of the deceased's debts prior to forwarding any funds in the deceased's accounts.) The Counseling and Outreach Unit will notify the next-of-kin/designated representative in advance of the return and issuance of all funds.

9.1 Deceased's Debts or Debts due the Deceased

If the deceased Volunteer has outstanding debts or there are debts due to the deceased, the Post will contact the Counseling and Outreach Unit by e-mail immediately for instructions.